867
[309] lock in addition. But boys never wear the ring of hair, which would be insulting to them.

864 When sex differentiation becomes more emphasized in the culture, at about seven, sex talk and sex play goes on primarily within the peer group of the same sex. The invitation to do this is "enkä sälantiya", (lit. let us play at guessing impolite matters). They play hide and seek, whisper, re-enact what they have observed their parents do at night in the hut, and phantasy experimenting with sexual possibilities. Children observe a lot in the quiet of the night in the hut, but are careful not to be seen watching. They misunderstand and are greatly puzzled, since no elder will explain "impolite matters" to them. It is impolite even to mention the names of genitals and reproductive organs, such as "kola" for penis, and "ems" for vulva, so they are merely whispered about. In church school, boys are puzzled by overt references to "Mary's womb" and "God's seed", but questions are rejected as "rudeness". Youngsters in town have broader information, because there they hear "rude" talk more often among adults.

D. Toys and Games.

857
524 The economic activities of children in the fields, where they spend much time in guarding but do little intensive labor, is regarded by them more in the nature of play. It is fun to throw rocks at thieving baboons and shoot pebbles at birds, with slingshots made of "nacha" fiber.

The boys also make a bullrearer, "mit", to scare birds away from seeds and mature crops. This instrument is also called, onomatopoetically, "zurrurrenesh" (from "täzerämärrärä", to

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 bride. Each guest brings a number of "enjara" breads, perhaps a dozen, and they leave cash contributions with the host, at least ETB$1-3. The afternoon is largely spent consuming barley-beer ("talla") of which the women have previously brewed huge jarsful. Particularly the "mizē" and the young men who will soon race across the countryside to fetch the bride, drink their fill to "be strong" and light and gay on their feet later on. The groom has been fed on meat and butter, to be strong; while the bride fasts to be "weak". The more old-fashioned elders, especially those not kinsmen, sit in a corner, and eat and drink there, draped off by spread-out tofas.

585 864 Sex information for the groom is one of the duties of the "mizē", who are usually older than he and married, but not of his parental generation, (particularly the older chief mize of the two, the "ser mizē", though sometimes the second "mize", called "qolqol mizē"). If necessary, they are even expected to assist in the deflowering of a recalcitrant bride who suffers last-minute fright, by holding her down so that the groom can consumate the marriage that night. The bride is given no such outright information, and can only guess what will happen to her from whisperings of other girls and from what she has observed in the hut at night of intimacies of the parents on the raised "alga" bed. She may well be confused and frightened, but this is regarded as praiseworthy, as virtuous. Her nails are trimmed down to the skin just before the wedding, so that she cannot scratch, then placed in hot butter to heal and be smooth.

585 About three hours before nightfall, about 4PM (unless the bride's hamlet is too far away, in which case earlier), the groom appears before the "dase" of his patrilineal kin, dressed in a new, well-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 a certain amount of ritualized delay, the groom and his party are admitted. The groom is not supposed to have seen his bride previously, and is at first shown only a number of similarly dressed maids, among whom sits his fiancée. The maids are then concealed by a curtain or in another room while one of the best men, called *mizē*, determines through various ruses which of the girls is the bride. She is revealed to the groom by being carried out on the back of the *mizē*.

The civil service itself is quite simple, consisting of an oath in the name of the emperor or of some deity that "she is my wife" and "he is my husband," the latter often uttered in so faint a voice that it must be interpreted by one of the bride's relatives. After the oaths and a certain amount of feasting, the couple and the groom's party depart for the home of the groom's parents, where another celebration is under way.

After the festivities the bride and groom retire to a hut which has been set aside for them for the first week or so of their marriage. The experience of the wedding night cannot be very pleasant for the bride. For the first time in her life she is far from the familiar setting of her parental home. She [864] has had little or no sexual instruction, other than the knowledge that sexual [831] matters are "rude" and that she is supposed to resist her husband's advances as fiercely as possible. The groom, on the other hand, has been taught to regard the nuptial night as a battle in which the bride must be forcibly overcome. If somewhat anxious himself, he at least has the moral, and sometimes the physical, support of his two or three *mizē*. If he is unable to accomplish the defloration, he may call in the first *mizē*—usually a married relative or friend with some experience—who will perform the task. When at last the bride has been conquered, the *mizē* take the bloodstained cloth as proof of the girl's virginity. Their triumphant chant—*ber ambär sabara-lewo*, "he has broken the silver bracelet for you" (for the bride's parents)—is the signal for further rejoicing and revelry among the wedding guests. On the morrow groom and friends discuss the conquest with masculine glee, and the bride remains embarrassed and cowed.

[831] The trauma of the wedding night does not appear to do irreparable damage to the girl, however, for Amhara women have the reputation for enjoying sexuality as fully as the men. Indeed, some Amhara maintain that the girl will respect neither her groom nor herself if she does not put up a fight 585 until subdued. With the consummation of her marriage, moreover, the 885 Amhara girl has become a woman, a *sēt*. This represents a considerable elevation of her status and permits her to acquire certain distinctively adult possessions, usually presented to her by the groom. Traditionally these have included a dress, a double-layered toga (*kutā*), a headband, a mirror, a leg bracelet, a ring, an umbrella, and, in wealthier families, a colored silk robe.